DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 290 843 CE 049 398

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TITLE Program Standards for Business Education. Vocational Education Program.
PUB DATE [87]
NOTE 9p.; Document printed on light green paper.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Standards; Advisory Committees; Articulation (Education); *Business Education; Course Content; Curriculum; *Curriculum Development; Educational Equipment; Elementary Secondary Education; *Entrepreneurship; Equal Education; Occupational Clusters; *Program Content; Small Businesses; Special Programs; *Statewide Planning; Student Organizations
IDENTIFIERS Future Business Leaders of America; *Wisconsin

ABSTRACT

Comprehensive business education programs must serve the total school population through a relevant curriculum oriented toward providing career direction, a sound foundation for advanced study, and the development of employability and job skills. A comprehensive program consists of many components, including curriculum, equipment, advisory committees, student organizations, staff, and students. To be complete, business programs must encompass the areas of administrative services, accounting, and business enterprise. Course titles, position descriptions, student materials, and curriculum guides must be updated to eliminate stereotyping and incorporate current trends in business education. Because of the increasing importance, the following topics should be covered in individual courses: keyboarding, business communications, entrepreneurship/free enterprise, human relations, microcomputer applications, information processing, dictation and transcription, business concepts, business procedures, and business occupations. In schools where only one advanced instructional program component is offered in business education, the planned activities and experiences should be individualized and designed to accommodate students from all three clusters (administrative service, accounting, and business enterprise occupations). The areas of articulation, state-of-the-art equipment, equity, business advisory committees, and special needs must also be given adequate consideration. (MN)

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PROGRAM STANDARDS FOR BUSINESS EDUCATION

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

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PROGRAM STANDARDS FOR BUSINESS EDUCATION

Historically business education has provided two major types of business education (1) education in those aspects of business that concern every member of our society, and (2) instruction for those persons who wish to become wage earners in a business occupation. Comprehensive business education programs must serve the total school population through a relevant curriculum oriented toward providing career direction, a sound foundation for advanced study, and the development of employability and job skills. A comprehensive program consists of many components—curriculum, equipment, advisory committees, student organizations, staff, students, and others. Simplistically, business education serves two missions – education about business and for business.

The Need for Business Education

The future for workers trained in business education is indeed bright! Demand for personnel in administrative services is predicted to rise twenty-eight percent in this decade alone; twenty percent of all administrative support positions are unfilled today; and by the year 2000, eighty percent of the total work force will work in information processing fields.

Other than the specific knowledge gained or the job skills learned is there any value to business education? The question could and probably should be asked of any secondary school curriculum.

Many of the skills taught in vocational business courses are being viewed as essential to the education of all youth. The rapid advent of computer technology has made utilization of the computers in some form an essential part of jobs in occupational areas other than those in business, and good keyboarding skills are needed to input into computers. The development of skills in business communications (including reading, writing, oral, and listening skills), human relations, and good work attitudes have been identified by employers as *very* important for success in the world of work. The 1986 White House Conference on Small Business released 60 recommendations for legislation to help small business. Their only educational recommendation in the top 10 (ranked number 6) was "Include business education in curriculums for grade school and high school."

Other values of a good secondary business education program most often cited in literature include:

1. Improves productivity of workers and businesses
2. Strengthens linkages between businesses and the school
3. Aids students in making short-term and long-term career goal decisions
4. Reinforces and extends basic education skills
5. Develops problem solving and decision making skills
6. Accommodates a variety of student interests
7. Illustrates current changes in organizational and operational structure of business enterprise
8. Prepares people for self-employment
9. Develops understanding and appreciation of personal and business economics
10. Develops understanding and appreciation of the American system of competitive enterprise
11. Encourages human values and attitudes desired by employers

As you will note from the list above, these values incorporate most of the components contained in Education for Employment.

Curriculum

The primary occupational focuses recommended in the business education curriculum model (see next page) are accounting, administrative services, and business enterprise. The model is organized into clusters so students can select the courses which are most relevant to individual career choices. Course offerings within clusters need to be individualized to accommodate the career objectives of students. The intent of the model is to provide a general framework that districts can adapt to reflect individual philosophies, student/community needs, and student populations.

It should be noted that the curriculum model lists some courses, such as keyboarding, at more than one grade level. Each school district should determine the appropriate level for those courses to be offered within the structure of their individual districts. Keyboarding, for example, should be offered prior to the time that students are expected to do any significant amount of inputting into a computer and **should be taught by a business education teacher**.

Following is a description of each occupational area in business education:

Administrative Services — Competencies gained in this cluster include manipulation of keyboard and ten-key pad, information processing/typewriting, office procedures, computer applications, business math, business communications, shorthand and/or machine transcription and American enterprise principles.

Accounting — Competencies gained in this cluster include basic accounting procedures as well as computerized accounting, keyboarding, business enterprise principles, office procedures, business math, business communications, and some data processing concepts. Competencies in business and office procedures are needed because of the interdependency of specific departments and functions in an office (the integrated office).

Business Enterprise — Competencies gained in this cluster will provide a student with an education about business rather than education for an occupation. The student will have a good understanding of the American free-enterprise system, computer applications, business math, economics, business law, and business communications.

Course Titles

Course titles, position descriptions, student handbooks, and curriculum guides should be updated to eliminate stereotyping and to incorporate current trends in business education. Examples:

CHANGE FROM Clerical/Secretarial Office Practice
TO Business Procedures; Business Occupations; Administrative Services

CHANGE FROM Secretary/Clerk-typist
TO Administrative Support Personnel

CHANGE FROM Typewriting
TO Keyboarding; Information Processing

ELEMENTARY BUSINESS EDUCATION

- Keyboarding (9 weeks/semester)
- Microcomputer Applications (9 weeks/semester)

MIDDLE SCHOOL BUSINESS EDUCATION

- Keyboarding (9 weeks/semester)
- Career Exploration in Business (9 weeks/semester)
- American Enterprise (9 weeks/semester)
- Microcomputer Applications (semester/year)

HIGH SCHOOL BUSINESS EDUCATION

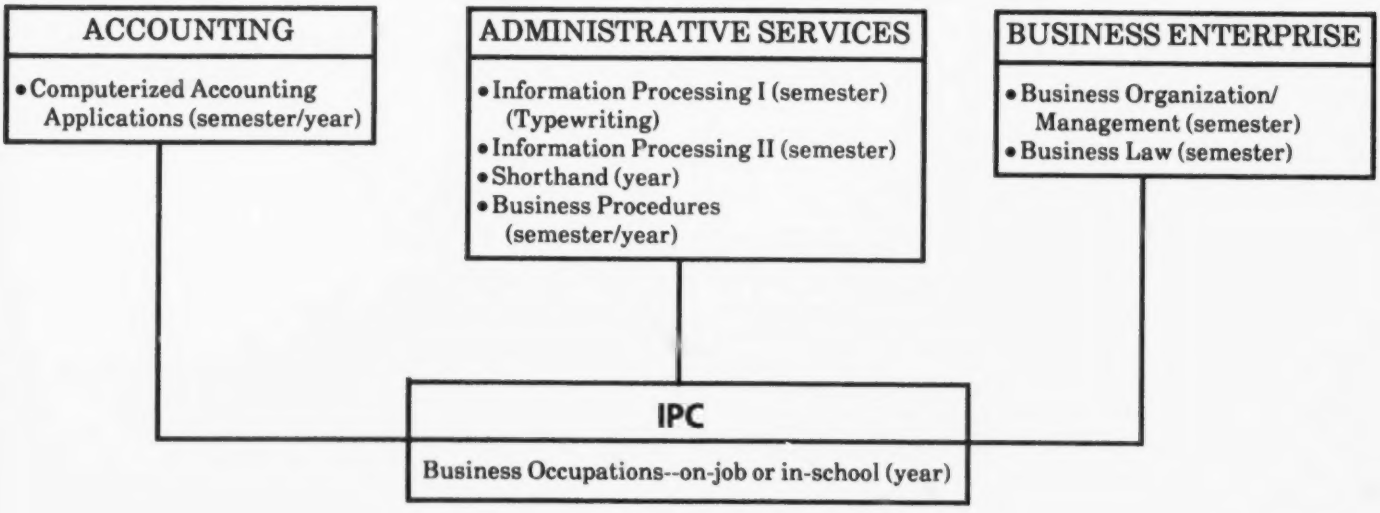
Recommended Core

- Keyboarding (9 weeks/semester)
- Microcomputer Applications (semester/year)
- Business Concepts (semester)
- Business Communications (semester)
- Accounting (year)
- Employability Skills (semester)

Recommended Electives

- Personal Finance and Consumer Education (semester)
- Notetaking (semester)
- Recordkeeping (semester/year)
- Business Mathematics (semester)
- Business Economics (semester)

CAREER PATH/CLUSTER



School districts determine the appropriate grade to offer those courses that are listed at multiple levels.

Occupational Preparation Program

Business education programs must have an occupational preparation component. In-school or on-job methodologies may be used in the development of the advanced instructional program component (IPC). Instructors must be vocationally certified to coordinate the IPC. Extended contract time must be available to IPC coordinators to fully develop and implement an on-job program. It is expected that training agreements and training plans be on file and that students are placed on jobs that provide for training and experiences tailored to fit individual career aspirations.

Course/Unit Descriptions

The following courses/units have been selected for discussion because of their increasing emphasis in future planning:

Keyboarding. Keyboarding as a tool of communications has broad applications, and it is increasingly true that all employees from entry-level workers to management need keyboarding skills. The best grade level to offer keyboarding depends on when a student begins to use the keyboard as a major mechanism for inputting data. Keyboarding may be REQUIRED of all students as early as grade school. Students should be taught to use the alpha keys and ten-key calculator "pad." Emphasis must be directed at accuracy, speed of stroking, and proofreading. **Keyboarding should be taught by business educators.**

Business Communications. The development of written, oral, listening, and human relations skills should all be included in Business Communications courses. A review of basic English skills such as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc., is also usually included since competence in these areas is essential to further development of communication skills. Business educators should teach the business communications course and, at the same time, integrate communication skills into their entire program. By authorization of the state superintendent, Business Communications may be substituted for a graduation requirement in English.

Entrepreneurship/Free Enterprise. The Small Business Administration reveals that 98% of all establishments are classified as small businesses, they employ approximately 50% of the work force, businesses with fewer than 20 employees create two out of three new jobs, and 80% of new jobs were created by firms with fewer than 100 employees. Small businesses tend to hire persons with little experience as they cannot afford the high salaries for experienced employees. Thus, the bulk of newly created jobs are filled by persons entering the work force, and small businesses must depend upon the education community to supply qualified persons. Entrepreneurship/Free Enterprise concepts should be integrated into a variety of business courses and separate courses may be offered in conjunction with other disciplines. Subject matter should explore the organization of businesses, how to establish a small business, entrepreneurship as a career opportunity, and awareness of the risk-taking attitude inherent in entrepreneurship activities. The Junior Achievement (JA) approach which utilizes expertise from the business community should be considered when offering this course.

Human Relations. Employers frequently cite a critical need for the development of human relations skills among employees, particularly recent high school graduates. Learning activities in human relations should be infused into the entire business education curriculum. Human relations comprises understanding yourself and others, communicating with others, experiencing career satisfaction (including needs, motivation, the will to work, morale, job satisfaction, attitudes, and leadership), and dealing with prejudices and biases.

Microcomputer Applications. A course in Microcomputer Applications is intended to provide an overview of all the uses of the computer as they relate to aspects of business. Students should be given an introduction to the various types of software utilized in business; i.e. data base management, spreadsheet, word processing, business graphics, etc. If these areas are covered in other courses within a defined occupational preparation program, then a separate course may not be needed.

In some school districts a course such as Microcomputer Applications will be offered in lieu of a Computer Literacy or Computer Studies course. When the course is designed to take the place of Computer Literacy or Computer Studies, adaptations need to be made to accommodate the needs of the general student body. Students will need to learn concepts and skills essential for survival in the computerized information age with the focus of the course being on the student as a USER of personal computer applications. It is intended that students enter the course having had a minimum of nine weeks of keyboarding.

Information Processing. The trend toward automated, integrated office systems is rapidly occurring and should be reflected in business programs. The multi-function work stations that can blend capabilities of voice, document, data and image communications also include telephone-switching devices that can transmit both voice and data. While secondary business education programs may not be able to afford this sophisticated equipment, the concepts and skills needed to input into such equipment can be achieved using microcomputer technology and available software packages. The major thrust of secondary information processing courses revolves around word processing, text editing, information manipulation, data processing, and telecommunication skills.

Dictation and Transcription. Skill development in dictation and transcription is essential for preparation of students interested in careers in business. Not only are transcription skills necessary for today's administrative support personnel, but the ability to dictate is becoming increasingly important as these people assume more administrative responsibilities. The skill of dictation is essential for all persons in a business environment, not just managers/supervisor. This skill development should take place in courses such as Business Communications, Information Processing, Business Procedures, Business Occupations, and Business Organization/Management.

Business Concepts. Business Concepts can be defined as that broad area of knowledge that deals with the American economy, identifies and explains the role of business in a free enterprise system, and provides content and experiences that prepare individuals for effective participation as citizens, workers, and consumers in American society. Some schools may also wish to incorporate a variety of other topics under the title of business concepts such as consumer education, business law, general business, free enterprise or entrepreneurship, and business organization/management. Business concepts and related general business units can also be incorporated into Business Procedures and Business Occupations courses or offered in conjunction with other disciplines.

Business Procedures. Formerly referred to as office practice or office procedures. Suggested units may include business machines; use of telephone; business organizational and management procedures; computerized payroll; employability skills; advanced information processing; electronic filing; business math; further development of basic business, economic, and entrepreneurship concepts; and further training in business communications. This course is generally offered prior to Business Occupations but may also be taken by students not able to enroll in the advanced IPC.

Business Occupations. The methodology of systematically supervised on-the-job work experience which includes related classroom instruction and is directed by a teacher coordinator is recommended as the advanced instructional program component (IPC; formerly referred to as capstone courses). As an alternative, simulated work experience including work flow and interaction between departments

and other businesses may be used (formerly MOOP). In schools where only one advanced IPC is offered in business education, the planned activities and experiences should be individualized and designed to accommodate students from all three clusters. Thus, prerequisites need to be eliminated as much as possible to be sure not to exclude students from any particular career cluster. (For example, students with career objectives in Business Enterprise may not need two years of information processing or typing to participate in the advanced IPC.) However, students must have developed sufficient competencies needed for the career objective of their choice prior to participating in the advanced IPC. Some schools may be large enough to offer more than one advanced IPC and separate IPCs may be offered in Administrative Service Occupations, Accounting Occupations, and Business Enterprise Occupations.

Articulation

There are many different types of articulation. It is important that a conscious effort is made in school districts to be aware of the need for articulation between vocational departments, guidance, and other departments as well as articulation between elementary, middle schools, high schools, and post secondary institutions. The preparation of competency-based curricula jointly developed between secondary and post secondary business educators will help to ensure that students are provided with an opportunity for relevant entry-level vocational training at the secondary level and avenues for advanced training at the post secondary level.

Equipment

Obsolete equipment should be removed from all business education programs. Some examples of obsolete equipment include manual typewriters, unit-record equipment, liquid and stencil duplicators, full-keyboard adding machines, and rotary calculators.

Microcomputers should replace typewriters. While one can point to businesses that use electric or electronic typewriters, the movement toward the automated office clearly indicates the use of a multi-function machine, a microcomputer. The versatility of microcomputers makes it appropriate for use in graphics, accounting, data base, information processing, keyboarding, and other areas. Business applications are facilitated through the utilization of appropriate software/coursework. Hardware costs are decreasing while at the same time the capabilities of the microcomputer are increasing. Consequently, single-function machines are no longer feasible in light of budget restraints and fiscal accountability. Some school districts have been purchasing low-level electronic typewriters in hopes of interfacing with microcomputers and using them as printers in the future. CAUTION: Consider all ramifications in purchasing electronic equipment such as projected cost of interface cables, types of microcomputers to which interfacing is possible, and rapid changes in technology which may preclude their projected future use.

Equity

Opportunities in business, office and administrative support occupations are increasing rapidly due to changes in managerial styles, advanced technology, and the impact of information processing. The future for careers in business education is excellent and can lead to an enjoyable and secure future for both men and women. Equal access must be assured for all students.

Business Advisory Committee

Business education programs must be served by an active advisory committee. Effective advisory committees meet at least two to three times a year and actively involve all members of the business education staff. Efforts should be made to secure advisory committee members that represent a variety of areas in business education. A rotation schedule should be developed to replace one-third of the advisory committee members each year and to limit the involvement of each business advisory committee member to three years. In districts with more than four or five business education staff members, consideration might be given to rotating involvement of business education teachers on advisory committees.

Advisory committee members need to be actively involved in the business education program. A chairperson from the business sector should be selected. Suggestions of ways advisory committees can be utilized include: assisting in conducting community surveys, needs assessment, and student follow up; developing public relations material; advising on equipment and curriculum updates; participating in mock student interviews; securing guest speakers and field trip placements; and many others.

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)

Every secondary business department staff member in Wisconsin should *jointly* sponsor an FBLA Chapter as an integral part of their business program. With *all* teachers and the department chairperson working together in sponsoring FBLA, the success of the chapter will bring pride to the students and the department. FBLA builds leadership skills, community awareness, personal growth, and recognition for the students and quality business programs.

Special Needs

The quality of the interaction that occurs between the business educator and the special needs student determines the degree of success of the program seeking to meet the needs of the special populations. The business educator should rely on the special educator for supportive services and when appropriate assist in modifying business programs. Prior to the placement of the student in the business education class, the business educator must be involved in the decision-making process which places the student in the business education program. The business educator must insist on input into the development and revision of the individualized education program (IEP) for business special needs students.

Additional Program Standards

- Needs assessment activities should be conducted and appropriate long-range plans developed and implemented
- Program evaluation must be conducted and the recommendations should be reviewed and implemented when appropriate
- All teachers should be encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities related to both business education and education in general. In addition instructors should be provided with opportunities for upgrading and retraining to reflect current trends and technological changes